

Spanish soldiers providentially mutinied on the morrow of the victory, and seized Antwerp as the gauge of their arrears of pay. Leyden enjoyed a respite of two months before Valdez closed in once more for the death grapple. By an oversight, which was to be atoned for by terrible suffering, the men of Leyden had neglected to take advantage of the interval to increase the garrison and store up provisions. For four fearful months, famine, combat, pestilence preyed upon the devoted city. For four fearful months these heroic men and women waited for the issue—relief, or death by starvation—fighting the while. Surrender was out of the question. "Take my body to appease your hunger/<sup>1</sup> cried the resolute burgomaster, Van der Werff, to the starving crowd that clamoured for capitulation, "but expect no surrender as long as I remain alive." At last, on the morning of the 3rd October, the Spanish army was nowhere to be seen, and the houses of Leyden seemed to float on the sea. It had fled during the night before the rushing waters of the spring tide which had brought Admiral Boisot's flat-bottomed fleet fifteen miles across the land to the rescue.

The great deliverance confirmed the faith of the patriots in their cause and in their leaders. Instead of allowing themselves to be beguiled by Requesens' overtures, the Estates of Holland showed their determination to continue the struggle to the bitter end by augmenting the powers of their stad-holder. They conferred on him "absolute power, authority, and sovereign command," made him dictator, in fact, for the time being (nominally, of course, under Philip), and granted 45,000 florins a month for the conduct of the war (15th November 1574). Six months later those of Zealand assented, and the two provinces were thus formally united in a definite policy of resistance. It looked for a time, however, as if the union must be shortlived. By a series of daring exploits in the autumn of 1575, Requesens drove a wedge of Spanish garrisons right into Zealand, and at last secured a hold on the sea-coast at Schouwen. His troops tramped in the darkness across the two estuaries, five feet deep, that separate Duivenland from Tholen on the one side, and Schouwen on the other, storming and massacring as far as the edge of the North Sea. The resistance of Ziericksee, the principal town